

The University Review

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Essay

What's In A Bag Of Cocaine?

The Mass Media Opiating The Masses

ANTHONY W. LEE

In a recent address on television, President George Bush tackled the very delicate issue of drugs in America. He promoted a campaign to "crack down" on drug use—by suffocating the easy availability of all drugs through closer scrutiny of illegal importation from Central and South American countries and by providing greater care for addicts in this country through rehabilitation programs and medical facilities. As part of his address, and in an effort to show to the American public the ubiquitous and pervasive presence of "hard" drugs, Bush pulled from beneath his table a bag of cocaine.

This bag, he declared as he held it before the camera, had been purchased by undercover agents from a peddler on the public

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grounds immediately across from the White House. Not only was the sale heinous (sold by a youngster no less) but the very location of the sale, by its very proximity to the most sacred political house (guarded doggedly by CIA agents), suggested a drug problem so insidious that no American, regardless of class or status, lived outside of its tenacious clutches. America, it would seem, had reached an apocalyptic moment, and Bush's plea for an urgent and thorough attack on drugs seemed as if the only chance to restore the country to its millennial destiny. At least, this is how the president wished the viewing public to see the crisis.

Later, and much to the embarrassment of the White House staff, journalists learned that the bag which the president had proffered possessed a rather sordid history. The heinous pusher was appar-

ently lured to the Mall by undercover agents, away from his more familiar (and less luxurious) territory and to the propitious location where the president wanted the purchase to be made. The youngster apparently had to be given directions to the rendezvous point (because, initially, he had no clue as to its whereabouts), reportedly remarking when he recognized the White House that the location was near to where "Reagan lives." The undercover agents had hoped to arrest him during a second transaction (to have taken place some time later), but when the youngster did not return (presumably because he'd learned of the sham), the agents came to the president empty-handed.

This scenario, part farcical and part morbid, strikes me as a rather cogent synopsis of the current relationship between visual mass media, the presidency,

CONTENTS

Anthony W. Lee peeks into a bag of cocaine and sees the media opiating its viewers...see below

Fiction: Vladimir Zeravica records the descent of a chuteless diver in *Three Wishes at 3,000 Feet*...page 2

Until a new drug is made which would turn the Son of Sam into the St. Francis of Assisi, David C. Ryan argues that we should make use of the death penalty...page 3

Michael Fitzgerald looks across the bow and sees 1,000 words, writing and Jack London...page 4

Anthony A. Agrella differentiates between the myth and reality of the Greek mission...page 5

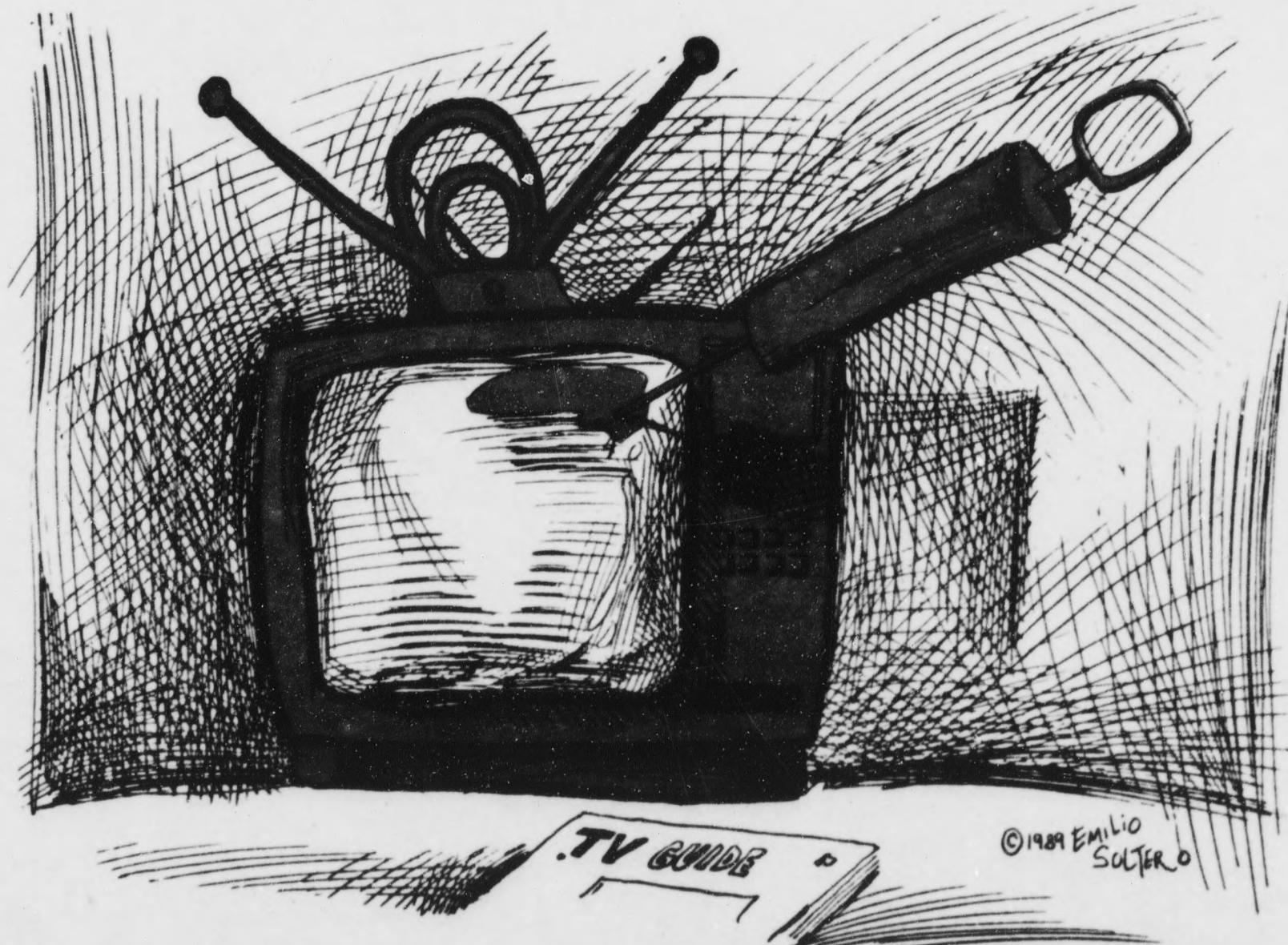
Robert Fairbanks witnesses the extinction of that 800 lb. gorilla—the journalist...page 6

Illustration by Emilio Soltero...page 5

Poetry from: Craig Hamley, Sven Beckmann, Carole Tchinguirian, Catelin O'Halloran, Norman M. Lora Paulino, Sean Cowen...

and popular journalism. Not only is mass media, by its very accessibility and ubiquity, an opiate to an information-hungry public, but its very fictive nature, its vague distinctions between presentation and representation ("re-presentation"), and its alluring masquerade as objective documentation are the addictive substances of the opiate itself. The high drama and seedy turnings of daily events constitute mass media's content, and television—the most addictive of media's forms—no longer just reports news but creates it too. Fiction and fact collide, all in the name of ideology (in this case, President Bush's), and no one is harmed because dominant ideologies are popular ones.

see Opiate on back page



Three Wishes At 3,000 Feet

by Vladimir Zeravica

Of all the days of the year to die, dying on your birthday would be the very worst. That is exactly what I am about to do, in another 7,000 feet or so.

I knew I shouldn't have accepted a birthday gift from Dave, especially since I sent him and his wife on that white-water rafting trip for their anniversary. I think they would have enjoyed themselves more if it hadn't been the dead of winter. With his usual one-upmanship style, Dave had to make my 23rd birthday an event to remember. Unfortunately, it will be the last damn thing I ever remember.

Only another 6,500 feet or so to oblivion.

Dave knew that I wouldn't refuse a birthday gift from him no matter how loudly my sense of self-preservation screamed. That is why he gave me two "Introductory Free-Fall Skydiving Lesson" certificates. Predictably, I accepted them. Naturally, I took him.

Suiting up for the jump was thrilling. My imagination was working overtime. I was imagining that Dave and I were not donning US army surplus jumpsuits in a drafty barn next to a small country airstrip that the skydiving company was leasing from the county. In my mind, we were several miles behind the trenches of the Western Front. We were about to exit the operations shack and race down the flight line to our Sopwith Camels. Dave and I were Knights of the Air, about to joust the hated enemy on our aerial mounts of wood, cloth and steel. When our rickety flying machines start down the grass field, I would toss my white silk scarf over my shoulder and return a wave to the beautiful French farmgirl that was standing by the runway. Before my bi-plane and I leave the ground, quite possibly for the last time, I would smile to myself, still tasting the French farmgirl's kiss.

Mr. Zeravica is a physics major at CSUS

God how I wish I had kissed the last French girl I had seen.

Only about 5,000 more feet to go.

Before Dave and I jumped out of the silver, twin engine aircraft, we were each to be securely strapped onto our jump instructors' chute harnesses. Therefore, the briefing our jump instructors gave us basically consisted of, "If you panic and grab me, I'll bite you."

Once in the airplane, I was truly frightened. I was sure the flying death-trap lofting me away from terra firma was built circa my World War I flying ace fantasy. The aircraft was literally being held together with duct tape and bungi cords.

Apparently, I was so anxious to exit this contraption that I forgot to wait for my jump instructor to strap my harness onto his. I simply rolled myself out the door without a parachute.

Now that I realize what I've done, I can't help but laugh. Surprisingly, I don't feel afraid. I'm just hoping that I pass out before I hit.

It will be in only another 4,000 feet or so.

Now I am hallucinating. Falling along beside me is a middle-aged man. He is clad in white burmuda shorts and a white short-sleeve shirt with a light pink Hawaiian floral print. I wonder how his Cuban stogie is staying lit at terminal velocity.

All I can think to scream is, "Hi. Who are you?"

His surprising reply is, "Look, Vladimir, you don't have to shout, we can still hear each other over this wind. I'm your guardian angel and you, my friend, are about to kick the bucket."

I am dumbfounded. I am plunging toward earth at 140-plus miles per hour without a parachute while having a conversation with my guardian angel. This can't be happening. Why isn't my life flashing before my eyes? Why is my angel



dressed like a Cleveland auto parts wholesaler on vacation in Florida? Will I be able to get into the "No Smoking" section of heaven?

"Aren't you going to save me?"

"No. Oh no. Orders are that you get three wishes. Please hurry. You see, after you die, I go on my first vacation in 12 decades. So what are your wishes?"

"All I can do is stare at him."

"What kind of guardian angel are you? Isn't GUARD the operative word in your title? Are you simply going to float by and watch me die?"

"First, 'The Lord helps those who help themselves.' Secondly, I think you will find out, all too soon, that angeling is highly overrated. Better hurry, you're at 3,000 feet."

At least I know that I'm going to heaven.

I have an idea.

"OK, Mr. Guardian Angel. My wish is not to get hurt or die when I hit the ground."

"Sorry, I neglected to tell you something. You can't wish away the inevitable or predestined. In this case, you must splat. I earned my vacation. Oh, and by the way,

here is your birthday present. Don't waste your second wish on "stopping time" so you can just hang in mid-air. It will not work."

Damn. Apparently God has a warped sense of humor.

I feel vindictive.

"My second wish is the following. I want my psycho-demon-bitch-from-hell ex-(no, make that former. Ex sounds so permanent) girlfriend's fiance to be rendered incurably impotent."

And I thought I was over her.

"This just isn't your day. You just wasted another wish."

"What! You can't even do that?"

"Hold on. It's not that we can't make him incurably impotent, it's that he already is."

At 2,000 feet I'm realizing there is a God.

My soon-to-be-vacationing angel is staring impatiently.

"I know what my last wish is."

"You're at 1,000 feet. Wish away."

"I wish my last thoughts recorded and published."

"Done. No one will believe it anyway."

I'm at 500 feet.

I hope I don't hit any of those cows.

Monroe's Dream

Before she ruined her appetite for quiche over bottles of pills without a dream and scandals waved at arm length there was the summer of '49 and a clown of a girl just on the edge to the door and not looking back. Then much later but before the rust of the camera spilled she had a vision she didn't like and ended it all leaving no time for the mister to catch up with here dream.

Sven Beckmann

For one electrified moment there was only two people in the world, LOVE, that night broke the strings of reason, The bodies fought together paced by desire, Raving, burning and dying with Love, they split the clock in no time land.

Carole Tchinguirian

Essay

The Executioner's Eve

David C. Ryan

As the appeals process for Robert Alton Harris nears exhaustion, he faces the most certain, absolutely irrevocable penalty within the parameters of justice—the sentence of death by execution.

Harris, 36, now sits in a cell in San Quentin for the kidnap-murders of two San Diego teenagers in 1978. He awaits a decision from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals which would either determine a stay of execution or go through with an antecedent decision that would have him executed in either November or December of this year.

His approaching sentence has stimulated activists from both sides of the chair, most notably single issue pot bangers who oppose the death penalty. This debate ceases to have a *Finis* at the end of the page even though the state of California overwhelmingly favors such a measure.

One of the primary battles over the death penalty, and one that has nothing to do with justice, is the argument of crime deterrence. Death penalty foes argue that capital punishment does not act as a general deterrence, and this is one of capital punishment's profound flaws. This argument may or may not be correct, but where the death penalty foes go wrong is by placing a great deal of significance on this almost unprovable, uncharitable and hazardously weak point.

Does the death penalty deter crime? This is a good question, but is general deterrence even a function of capital punishment? Although the deterrent value is often contested and disputed because of the general immeasurability of its effects upon criminals (because one cannot measure or know if a criminal chooses not to kill someone since he didn't kill anyone because of his fear of the death penalty), the one obvious value in executing those guilty of the most vicious of crimes is specific deterrence.

When Ted Bundy was executed in January of this year, he ceased to be a threat to prison administrators, guards and other prisoners, and his chance for escape vanished when he died. Obviously, Bundy's life clearly posed a threat to others when he was alive. So when Bundy was executed in Florida on January 24, he was specifically prevented from committing other murders.

Therefore, capital punishment as a form of specific deterrence works because Ted Bundy can no longer threaten the public by repeating those very acts he committed when he was alive. This obvious connection addresses the prime function of the

death penalty, which is to function solely as a form of punishment, and as an instrument of justice.

Does the modern criminal justice system of this country know how to therapeutically treat and rehabilitate the Ted Bundys, the Sirhans, the William Archie Fains, the Charles Mansons, the Onion Field killers of the world? To cure them of their psychological ills or anti-social viciousness? Maybe...maybe not. This is uncertain and arguable. And, perhaps, unknowable.

But what is certain is that the role of government is twofold: one, is to act as an arbiter of conflict, and a subsidiary role is to punish the guilty to service the needs of justice. Two, it is also the mission of government and the criminal justice system (in this case) to vigorously protect the public's proper sense of justice when it comes to punishing the Bundys of the world. This twofold function is designed to guarantee the safety of the public, and part of this function is to punish the violators who jeopardize the public's safety. Traveling the route of justice is a very long and twisting commitment. It means exhausting due process, and ensuring that the evidence is strenuously tested, and finally carrying out the jury's sentence (or judicial decision) of capital punishment to its decided conclusion.

Yet, what exactly is the guiding principle of the death penalty? The capital punishment principle operates on the notion or ideal that all men are created equal, and that, under the eyes of the law, all men have equal status and worth. When Ted Bundy killed that little girl or when he raped and murdered those two college students, he breached—even violated—this ideal; and under the eyes of the law, Bundy's life was certainly worth the lives that he had taken (although, morally, the difference between Bundy's life and the lives of his victims can be read in volumes), and that measure for measure is righteous retribution. The state's motive here is not to profit off of the execution of the evildoer, but serving justice by giving him his just deserts.

If society settles for life imprisonment over capital punishment in the most vicious of calculated crimes, then, as a result, society trivializes (and as George Will says, even "mocks") the forgotten lives of the murdered because the state finds worth preserving the likes of Manson and Sirhan instead of executing them. This form of preservation (even in confinement) jeopardizes the seriousness of the crime of murder because it says to those citizens abroad that all you are going to get for savaging another human life (or lives) is confinement within a cell.

This brings around again the argument of deterrence. Although, as aforementioned, capital punishment as a form of general

deterrence is almost an immeasurable concept, one can carefully assume that even the vilest of criminals intuitively fears execution more than life imprisonment. Although this assumption is unscientific, one knows the instinct of self-preservation is often the rule of conduct of human nature, and even so for criminals. For the criminal, execution is not a preferable alternative as opposed to being imprisoned for life, and if capital punishment was comparatively enforced with vigor as it was passed within the state of California in 1978 then, perhaps, capital punishment could deter capital crimes.

Certainly, some criminals are incapable of rationally calculating the punishment of their crimes, and some career criminals can overcome their natural fear of death and persist in imitating the acts of the guilty. So the death penalty in these cases has little effect upon criminals before they commit their acts of anti-social barbarism. Perhaps nothing can stop certain people from killing, but this moral failure does not mean they shouldn't face execution when found guilty.

The deterrent theory here is that once you make the cost of criminal activity very high, you push the potential criminal out onto the sidelines, because participating in a crime then becomes too costly, too high a price to pay. Yet, the greater risk, as sociologist Ernest van den Haag argues, by not having capital punishment is the chance of allowing future innocent victims to be killed by murderers who would have been deterred by a death penalty. So the burden of proof lies upon death penalty foes to scientifically prove that the death penalty does not deter potential murderers or dissuade people from imitating the guilty, or deter the predetermined and calculation of murderers.

Although a lot of time and energy is spent studying the effects of deterrence, this exhaustively circular argument has little to do with justice. Deterrence has to do with the psychological and sociological effects upon human beings. If justice is the primary concern of the criminal justice system, then general deterrence should not even be a



factor involved in calculating the punishment of the guilty.

If the function of government is to secure and enforce the safety of law abiding people within its jurisdiction, then punishing the guilty only enhances the safety and freedom of those who are innocent.

Death penalty foes like to argue that since the criminal justice system does not rape rapists or burn arsonists, and so on, that they should not also execute killers, and that the first and last rule of justice (an eye for an eye) is a fraudulent principle.

This kind of argument is unconvincing. First, we don't burn the homes of arsonists because the house didn't commit the crime, and how is justice served (not to mention the safety of the public protected) by burning down a piece of property? Second, raping rapists is an immeasurable form of punishment, and how would raping a rapist protect the public?

Justice has to do with punishing the guilty while also protecting the innocent. This dual nature can be functionally applied to executing murderers.

In a sense, the taking of a human life is both measurable and immeasurable. In the

see Execution on page 7

Hiding Out

Boy crawls the mirror
Temperature's rising inside
Time again I want to see you
Let's not explore outside

Abstractness motion
Colors rise to the sky
Faces outside the window
Please don't come inside
Sanctuary's devotion
For you only I cry

Craig Hamley

Essay

Sitting On The Deck In The Bay

Traveling And Writing On A 1,000 Words A Day

Michael Fitzgerald

In 1907, a time when sea travel was truly an adventure, Jack London wrote longhand, in pencil, sitting on the forward hatch of his 45-foot sloop the *Snark* in the middle of the Pacific, calmly composing the autobiographical novel *Martin Eden* while his second wife, Charmian Kittredge steered, Martin Johnson (who later became a famous naturalist) cooked, and Roscoe Eames, one of London's first editors, sat seasick in a forward cabin fuming because London had taught himself how to navigate while Roscoe could barely find the sextant, let alone use it.

London's regimen was 1,000 words per day, 365 days per year, as he cranked out short stories and novels and socialist tracts while building a legend about himself as a champion of the workingman. London today is most often pigeonholed as a writer of children's tales or as a writer of simple adventure yarns, not a social reformer or smasher of literary icons. But at the turn of the century he set new tones in the publishing world, crossing the lines of journalism, novel writing and short stories as comfortably as he sailed across the shoals in San Francisco Bay on weekend expeditions to clear his mind of his domestic troubles with his domineering mother

Mr. Fitzgerald is an associate professor of journalism. He wrote this article while sitting on the deck of his sailboat. It is approximately 1,000 words.

and his first wife, Bess Maddern.

In an era before videotaped movies, television and compact discs, London frequently read his works in progress for appreciative audiences of friends and literary rivals. A six-hour reading of the first half of *The Sea Wolf* (one of his best known works) held a gathering speechless (and virtually motionless), as London read carefully, the manuscript sitting on the same tree stump in Glen Ellen where he had written the work longhand, day by day, 1,000 words at a time.

London, like Hemingway, and a handful of other American authors is regarded as "larger-than-life," because of the often reckless way they lived, seemingly by a set of rules unknown to mortals. But he wrote and wrote and wrote: 1,000 words a day, 1,000 words a day.

By now you are wondering if this is a biographical paean to Jack London or some academic recap for American Literature students who've missed the opportunity to grab a copy of some Cliffs Notes?

No.

If a biography of Jack London is of interest, Irving Stone's *Sailor on Horseback* is still probably the best work ever done, despite some valiant, more recent efforts. If it's *Cliffs Notes* you're after, Cliffs's not here. And I'm not particularly sorry about it either.

This is about 1,000 words a day, about discipline, about inspiration and perspiration, and about writing for publications like the *University Review*, the *News and Review*, and *New York Times Review of*



Michael Fitzgerald At Home

"By now you're wondering if this is a biographical paean to Jack London or some academic recap for American Literature students who've missed the opportunity to grab a copy of some Cliff's Notes..."

Books. And about writing for yourself, to yourself, about yourself.

It may also be about why it is necessary to write — for everyone to write, not just professors trying to build up the RTP files, or English majors with a 150-page fiction requirement, or communication studies majors who have to script commercials.

Was that a rhetorical question without a question mark? Is it really necessary for people to write. Don't we live in an increasingly paperless society? And who cares anyway, because there's a new Madonna video on right now?

Sheesh. (Although Jack London would've loved Madonna. Really loved Madonna! But that's another *University Review* essay for the next edition "Madonna as a madonna: A psycho-social-religious analysis of the pop/rock Culture of the 1980s." Look for it under another author's name, though. Writing even a semi-serious piece about a woman who is as famous for performing in her underwear as for her singing, well. Just watch for another name. Any other name.)

Jack London (who wrote fully clothed, we believe) wrote mostly for one of the most elusive rewards writing has to offer.

Money.

How many American writers make what we would call "real dough" for their writing? (Please note, I said "make" not "earn" there is a big difference. Read most of the romance pulp fiction out today to see the distinction.)

Very few writers make "real dough" along the lines of a John Irving, or Tom Clancy or, (ugh,) Jackie Collins. Most commercial writers languish in the income

basement, where Ronald Reagan's trickle down theory seems too theoretical. These writers eke out small sums of money in exchange for large sums of their time creating works that may or may not set the publishing world on its ear. But it is work they think has a measure of importance. It needs to be written.

(Aha, we are getting to a point here...)

When London scrawled *The Sea Wolf*, *Martin Eden*, the *Call of the Wild*, *Burning Daylight*, or any of the hundreds of other short works he composed over his relatively short life, he fought constantly with the dual demons of Money and Conscience. He wrote some books for their cash value (though he never consciously wrote a trash book...How many authors can say that today?) but interspersed with popular works were *The Iron Heel* and *The Minions of Midas*, scathing social indictments of capitalism.

He wrote because he saw things he believed others didn't see. And he wrote because he knew he had to talk about them in a way that might affect others, a call to action of sorts.

So this, nearly 100 lines into an essay that started out with Jack London sitting on the hatch of a sailboat cruising a sometimes stormy Pacific is just that, a call to action for writers — and more important for observers of life — to put their pens to paper or fingers to keyboards or voices to tape recorders to speak up. All writers have a gift (Just ask them!).

see 1,000 Words, page 7

The Shadows

Sean Cowen

Tar-black shadows vow
to take my room's walls hostage; their blackness
creeping like jungle vines into my room's
abandoned corners, and bellowing,
with all their divine energy,
words that terrorize me into
submission to them.

"Obey!,"

they murmur through
one voice of cathartic and damp
dreariness.

"Obey your dreams, neveryours!"

they wail.
My heart freezes,
as if it is a cold morgue slab.
I can't utter even a single word
to myself, or them.
There is no time.
I can't shiver, or tremble,
or crawl away to safety.
These eclipse overlords
now are my generals
and I am sadly their specimen for the night...

Essay

It's Not All Togas And Beer

Anthony A. Agrella

"Toga! Toga! Toga!" When John Belushi uttered these now infamous words during the movie *Animal House*, Greek letter-social-college fraternities were given an unjust reputation. The fraternity man became nothing more than a beer guzzling, immature, woman-abusing, pledge-hazing, party animal with no redeeming qualities, and certainly was no benefit to society, as perceived by the public at large.

While some of these allegations and conceptions are not unfounded, the extremity of these negative attitudes and misconceptions of the fraternity man is unjust. In spite of campus opinion, CSUS Greek letter-social-college fraternities do have redeeming qualities and are a benefit to society.

"Where are the kegs?" Granted, this phrase is commonly heard around fraternity houses and during fraternity events throughout the country, yet there is also a growing trend toward alcohol awareness and conservatism across the nation. At CSUS, the Interfraternity Council passed a resolution eliminating alcohol at events during IFC rush.

Mr. Agrella is *Hornet* sports editor and a member of Pi Kappa Alpha

"Regarding the hazing of pledges, the necessity of hazing, be it physical ...mental... or a combination of the two was a prevailing attitude among many fraternity members...this belief is rapidly changing..."

This started the trend toward dry fraternities at CSUS. Among CSUS fraternities, Delta Chi is now a dry fraternity nationally. Their charter documents state that fraternity funds cannot be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.

Following the example set by Delta Chi, Pi Kappa Alpha at CSUS is also a dry house. Pi Kappa Alpha is even more rigid with their alcohol guidelines. The fraternity does not have any events where alcohol is provided for by the fraternity.

This includes mixers (social get-togethers with CSUS sororities), tailgate parties, and FAC's (an FAC is known as the *Friday Afternoon Club*, and is an opportunity for fraternity members to get together, drink, and socialize).

Pi Kappa Alpha has also instituted a policy where fundraising events cannot be sponsored by or affiliated with alcohol related businesses or organizations. This means that the fraternity cannot have fundraisers at bars or local nightclubs and cannot have local alcohol distributorships sponsor events (Capital Coors, for example, could not be a sponsor for the Pi Kappa Alpha Softball Tournament).

Pi Kappa Alpha has also provided rides for other fraternity and sorority members to their formals, initiation banquets, and pledge presentation banquets. This is another way that Greeks at CSUS are able to help alleviate the problems that occur during social occasions where alcohol and Greeks mix. By acting as chauffeurs for the other Greeks, Pi Kappa Alpha members allow the other Greeks to drink alcohol without the worry of having to drive home while under the influence.

Realizing that driving under the influence is one of the problems that concerns our society most, the Greeks at CSUS are making an attempt to curb this problem. The IFC is working on a program called "Greek Rides" where different fraternity members act as designated drivers over the weekend. It will be a free service, and the IFC is attempting to have an "800 number" installed for this program.

Considering that massive alcohol consumption often leads to mood and personality changes, the impression that the fraternity man is immature can directly be associated with the beer guzzling, party animal image. Greek organizations receive their greatest

public exposure at events such as football games. Events like this are often preceded by tailgate parties, which is an opportunity for people to barbecue, socialize, and drink. The public perceives the tailgaters to have no interest in the game by the way they struggle into the stadium after the contest has started, constantly socialize during the game, and often leave before the game is over. Although this generalization might apply to some members of Greek organizations, it for the most part is untrue.

At CSUS, according to Athletic Director Dr. Lee McElroy, it has been estimated by the athletic department that 65 percent of the students attending athletic events are from the Greek organizations on campus. Athletic events are a rallying point for the student body at a commuter school such as CSUS. If it is immaturity that leads these students to support CSUS athletes, then I guess that immaturity leads the public to support the Sacramento Kings, to support the San Francisco Giants, and to support the Oakland Athletics.

CSUS Greek organizations also include many sororities which affiliate with the fraternal

organizations. The fraternities are often seen singing to the sororities, delivering flowers to them, and interacting with them in philanthropic capacities. When a sorority member or a member of a fraternity little sister organization enters a room occupied by members of a fraternity, you will see the men in the room stand until the ladies have entered. The same action takes place when the females leave the room. I hardly see this as "women-abusing."

While non-Greek members of society will argue that mixers and tailgaters with sorority members and little sister organizations are a time for "scoring with the chicks," this is not the case. Looking at it objectively, any time college students gather in a social setting, be they Greek or not, natural attractions occur between males and females. This is human nature, not "women-abusing."

Regarding the hazing of pledges, the necessity of hazing, be it physical (push ups, scrubbing floors with toothbrushes, etc.), mental (peer pressure to conform, instilling a fear of failure, etc.), or a combination of the two (making a pledge scrub floors because he failed a test, making a pledge drink because he is told to, etc.), was a prevail-

see Fraternity on page 6



by Catelin O'Halloran

He moves like a cat
With a Cheshire grin
That could eat you up

And swallow you in.

Sexy eyes, sexy face,
sexy hands,
Sexy...

Sinewy...
Taut...

Tight.

A lone cigarette lit in the darkened room
Like a beacon

Beckons me.

Drifting smoke
From a drifter
Promising heat in the night.

His kiss
Sync-o-pated,
Well-traveled

Smoky.

His body
Well worn but hard
He makes his moves with care

Dilligently
Sensuously

Deliciously.

In his kiss I can feel pain
In his eyes I can see his past
In his lovemaking
Sync-o-pated...

I can tell the time...

Close Your Eyes and See Me

Do you hear what color I am?
Is my skin brown on your ear?
Please feel the sound of my skin:
Can you tell what color you hear?

If people were all born stone blind,
Would it matter if you were a Jew?
If we could see with the eye of the mind,
Would I be more tolerant of you?

Close your eyes and hear the white
Or black or yellow hue.
How important is dark or light?
Our ears can see what's true.

Tricia Greer Oerding

Fraternity

continued from page 5

ing attitude among many fraternity members through much of the existence of fraternal organizations. This belief is rapidly changing. Most fraternities have non-hazing policies which try to insure the safety of pledges. Granted, there are instances where hazing still occurs on some campuses including CSUS, but at CSUS the Greek organizations adhere to non-hazing guidelines. There are stiff penalties to the organizations which do not follow these guidelines, such as expulsion from the fraternity by the offending member, and expulsion of the president of a fraternity if his fraternity is found guilty of hazing.

All these misconceptions lead to the generalization that the fraternity man has no redeeming qualities and is of no benefit to society. By looking at fraternity members, past and present, from CSUS, this idea is easy to refute.

Current ASI president Steve Lawrence is a member of the Delta Chi fraternity. Many past ASI presidents are also Greeks, such as Dave Burns and Ron Day who are alumni members of Pi Kappa Alpha. Staff members of *The Hornet* are

Greek, such as advertising representative Ed Flores of Pi Kappa Alpha, photographer Darren Cohn of Sigma Pi, and "Arts and Features" assistant editor Joe Streng, a member of Phi Delta Theta. Many inter-collegiate athletes are Greek, including former professional football players Mike Black of Sigma Alpha Epsilon and Jeff Hoffman and Darren Arbet of Pi Kappa Alpha, as well as current athletes Angus McClure and Mark Massari (football) and Mike Daugherty (baseball) of Pi Kappa Alpha, Joe Milner and John Breckenridge (both football) of Sigma Chi, and J.R. Parquette (baseball) of Pi Kappa Alpha. The lacrosse team at CSUS features many Greeks, including Mark Heffner (Pi Kappa Phi), Sean Gracey (Sigma Alpha Epsilon), Bill Buckley (Sigma Chi), and Scott Smith, Rick Osen, Andy Sacks, Kevin Imm, and Rick Anglemoyer of Pi Kappa Alpha.

Greek members also commit a great deal of their time and effort to philanthropic endeavors. The Greek system has, over the course of the last year, accumulated more than 10,000 hours of community service work. Greek organizations

work with groups such as Big Brothers of America, the Sacramento Food Bank, the Sacramento Home for Abused Children, the CSUS Child Care Center, the Stinger Foundation, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and the American Red Cross.

It is unimaginable how our society could do anything but benefit from the efforts of these organizations aided by the CSUS Greek community. Despite the many fine qualities of the fraternity man at CSUS, "frat bashing" is still commonplace. It takes its toll on the Greek system when they (the Greeks) are labeled unjustly. It leads to biased coverage from the media, a generally negative attitude concerning fraternity men, and ultimately a decline in membership for fraternities.

While the myths and stereotypes are perpetuated by the general public about fraternity men, it takes a close examination to fully understand and appreciate what fraternity men accomplish and stand for. The fraternity man has redeeming qualities and is a benefit to society. It is not all togas and beer.

Marinus

The seagull flies deep in
the lonely canyon,
warm winds from the south
help her sustain the flight;
a bridge appears to slice
the blue.
Water, sky lighted by the sun;
a golden windsurfer suspended
perpendicular to the horizon,
Poseidon, king of the seven seas
surfaces among his dolphin escorts;
he brings news from Olympia,
Zeus, son of Kronos and mother Earth,
is dead.
Jesus, son of Joseph,
is in charge.
The seagulls fly and fly, and fly.

Norman M. Lora Paulino

1,000 Words

continued from page 4

That gift is the ability to take these tiny symbols (called, appropriately, letters) and form them into words and sentences which, if done properly transmit an idea or concept from writer to reader. How important is the idea? That's hard to say unless it goes from writer to reader. How many ideas languish because of a tired (or dare we say lazy?) hand, unwilling to push out of torpor. Then there's the fear, of course. Will the work be ridiculed (Am I wide open here or what?). What will other students, colleagues, administrators think?

Does that really have to matter if you have something to say?

But there's something equally important for the writer, beyond what rewards exist for the readers. The writer learns quickly that in order to write, the writer must clarify/purify/anyothereye the words/sentences/ideas/concepts

into a coherent whole for themselves. And in the process — take a breath — the writer comes to a much greater understanding about the subject being studied (Is this really true?). You can bet Madonna's underwear on it.)

Jack London fictionally solved many of his personal problems through his writings. In the *Kempton-Wace Letters*, he dismissed the idea of romantic love as something silly and girlish, only to realize a year or so later, that romantic love was as much a part of his soul as his love of the sea. In *John Barleycorn*, London wrote about alcoholism and his lifelong battle with the bottle. *John Barleycorn* should be required reading at all Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

London's 1,000 words a day equals about four pages of double-spaced writing on a standard typewriter (does anyone us a

typewriter anymore?). Written longhand it works out a page or so more, depending on how demanding a elementary school teacher you may have had or how bad your cursive has gotten these days. If you're computing you would fill about two full screens before you would match up. If you're talking into a tape recorder (yes, there is some argument that is "writing", too) you should talk for about half-hour or so, stopping and starting as ideas come and go.

London sat calmly writing Martin Eden while the *Snark* took on an inch of water per hour, telling Charmain, Martin and Roscoe, "I've got a book to write. You sail us."

How much easier it would be to do sans the rising fluid.

And Madonna will still be prancing on videotape whenever you need her.

Execution continued from page 3

first case, we do not know how much a victim's loved ones will miss him and how much the world would have benefited from his presence, contributions and talents. Yet, at the same time, when the victim was murdered, his presence was quantitatively missed. There is no more of that sentient being who was living and breathing, who was capable of reason and love, walking this earth. The irrevocable moral damage is that the victim is now gone, dismissed from the face of the earth by the arbitrary whims or the predetermined calculations of a murderer.

If capital punishment is an act of abomination in such an advanced society as ours, as death penalty foes argue, then giving up the pursuit of justice as a form of righteous retribution is a serious loss of will. If justice is a meaningful pursuit regardless of the demands or costs placed upon the law and the criminal justice system, then the principle of the death penalty cannot (must not) be given up as a regrettable necessity. There just might be a time when we discover the causes of crime, and perfect the techniques of rehabilitation. And if, as William F. Buckley suggests, a futuristic drug could be invented to turn the Son of Sam into the St. Francis of Assisi, then we should by all means make use of such a drug.

But until then, we must cope with the John Wayne Gacy's, the Juan Caronas, the Green River Killers, the Texas Tower Killers, as best as justice permits in dealing with their crimes of torturing women, mutilating teenagers, killing police officers, and all the other victims who have perished due to the grotesque motives of certain individuals. But just because we make use of the death penalty does not mean careful thought should cease in finding the causes of crime and refining the rehabilitation techniques criminals.

COMMENTARY

Gorillas In The Mist

In The Mountainous Landscape of Political Campaigns, Reporters Just Seem To Get Lost In The Mist

Robert Fairbanks

I used to tell my journalism students that being a governmental reporter is like being an 800 lb. gorilla. (You know the old joke: Where does an 800 lb. gorilla sit? Answer: Anyplace it wants to.)

The reporter is like a big gorilla, I explained, because of the enormous good or harm he can do to natives in the land of government and politics. With but one swipe across his computer keyboard, or but one sound bit during the evening news, this chest-thumping beast can make or break a career.

Thus, one saw natives obediently answering all reporters' questions, no matter how inane; quickly responding to all reporters' phone calls, no matter how inconvenient; and falling all over themselves to pick up reporters' tabs for lunches, dinners and drinks.

Mr. Fairbanks teaches journalism at CSU

As I said, I used to tell that to my students. But I don't anymore. Today's natives in the land of government and politics are not merely restless; they are downright revolting in their lack of fear.

Look, for instance, at the recent case of Assemblyman Tom Bates, who unabashedly admits having called his Human Services committee into secret session to deal with several controversial bills. As he frankly told reporters, he was simply trying to protect himself and the other members from being embarrassed by having to explain publicly the reason for their votes.

Furthermore, Bates was merely following precedent. The entire Assembly was discovered several months ago to have been making decisions affecting members' perquisites during secret sessions.

Outrageous, you say. And of course it was. But from the journalistic point of view, the outrage was not so much what Bates and others had done. It was their open admission of same. For it is this brazen truth telling that marks the reporter/gorilla decline.

Let me explain.

About 20 years ago, there was a state senate committee that dealt exclusively with high profile, controversial legislation, much of it concerning liquor and horse-racing. As far as the public knew, the committee met on Thursday mornings to debate issues and vote on bills.

But committee members also met privately for a Wednesday night dinner, at which they thrashed out among themselves who would say what the next day, who would propose which amendments and who would vote how.

However, the chair of the committee—unlike Bates—never admitted to a reporter the truth of what was happening. (I should know because I was his press aide at the time, and he didn't tell me either.) If a reporter found out about the dinner sessions and asked about the chair would reply that legislative business was rarely discussed during these private meetings and that committee members dined together only to restore friendships that were sometimes strained by all the di-

sive decisions that the committee made.

The chair in this case was a San Francisco state senator named J Eugene McAtee, and I believe that he was as honest, basically, as Assemblyman Bates. But McAtee was afraid to tell the truth, afraid of what might happen to him politically if the reporter/gorillas at the state Capitol discovered that bills were being debated and their fates were being determined in secret. Surely, there would be an uproar, and surely it would cost him at the polls. (He was running for Mayor of San Francisco at the time.)

Although I haven't spoken with Bates, it seems obvious to me that he lacks that kind of fear. And from what I can see of others in politics and government nowadays, they are similarly unafraid. Short of being caught in some downright illegal act, politicians today just don't seem to be as concerned as they used to be about what some reporter might say of

The Coming of the Second Crossing

The dirt stretches on
Down the winding road
It's been so long now
Since I've seen a soul

The stars shine above me
The moon glows over my head
It's been so long now
My body feels dead

Where are you now?
You creature of hate
Stop this now
Show me your face

Please come for me soon
I have no fear
Take me away
Draw me near.

Craig Hamley

see Gorillas on page 8

Opiate

continued from page 1

Rather than lament the manipulation of visual mass media by politicos (a rather publicized relationship already) or proselytize on the integrity of public officials (I think my position is pretty clear), I would like to deconstruct this rather complex scenario, if only in a general way, in order to uncover something of the discourse that produced the president's infamous bag of cocaine. I am concerned here with what the French philosopher, Jean Baudrillard, called a "simulacra"—that is, when representation overwhelms reality and "fact" no longer becomes an issue. In particular, I am interested in how visual mass media no longer represents life but, rather, imitates television.

Simulation, as Baudrillard has explained, is a life-like re-enactment of an actual event. To simulate a heart attack—cold sweat, pale skin, glassy eyes, perhaps even a few clutches to one's chest. To a casual onlooker, your simulated heart simulation differs from imitation because the latter makes no claims to be real. Whereas a simulation feigns fact, imitation proclaims its artificiality.

Television—its sit-coms, soap operas, dramas—does not simulate life but rather imitates it. Television proclaims its artificiality by distilling life's events into a half hour or an hour, filled with every conceivable twist and turn of events (gunfights, hijackings, etc.), most of which each of us rarely experiences in the course of a lifetime. Its glamorous stage sets and beautiful people are a fiction, never pretending to be an accurate cross-section of middle America. On comedies, plots are accompanied

by the laughter of an audience in order to pronounce the humor of each joke. On soap operas, music underscores the emotional developments of each moment. The effect of such imitation is that we, as viewers, are conditioned to watch television by understanding specific cues. In fact, we might even wait for such cues. What, we might ask, would a comedy be like without background laughter? Would we, at home, be required to supply the noise, and would this, in substance, change our "enjoyment" of watching the comedy?

Our expectations when watching television have been shaped by the symbols of imitation itself. News telecasts proclaim themselves different from comedies and dramas by documenting life rather than imitating it. Usually, in such telecasts, we receive film footage of the aftermath of actual events—a news reporter standing before a house telling us of the tragic events that occurred within just a few hours before. Occasionally, camera people are able to capture an event in progress; usually, the action is difficult to discern, and we might be disappointed with the lack of detail or descriptiveness. In short, we are disappointed because we can't watch the event with the carefully constructed stage settings, the propitious camera angles, or the selected cues we are accustomed to with a drama. Comparatively speaking, life is boring when imitation is so entertaining.

In truth, when each of us watches the news, we still rely on the cues of imitation. We judge the quality of film footage by how closely it resembles dramatic footage. Although we lack the music and laughter of

"imitation" television, we simply thrust our expectations onto the newscaster. When the reporter smiles while reporting a "good" story, we smile too (if only in our minds); when the reporter, with a look of stolid sincerity, tells us of a "tragic" story, we accept the gravity of the event. The reporter's expressions, choice of words, even choice of story sequence are our cues. It's no surprise that "good" newscasters are as highly paid as "good" actors and actresses.

Recently, the major networks have introduced news simulations—for example, *Saturday Night with Connie Chung*. Rather than record actual events, these programs simulate the stories with the help of a carefully prepared script and some good actors and actresses. We needn't worry about poor camera angles or fuzzy description anymore, and even more conveniently, every story is distilled into a cogent one hour program. News, then, approaches drama by adopting the overt and fictive visual cues. Presumably, this shift provides for better "entertainment," and fact is better conveyed through the guise of fiction.

Ultimately, television ratings dictate news formats. Linking the cues of visual mass media to high capitalism is not a terribly obscure thought, but as much as I am tempted to do so, I am more concerned with the ideological education that each American receives through media coverage—specifically its forms of a controversial issue. When President Bush presented his bag of cocaine, he did not create a discourse; he merely capitalized on one that already existed in visual culture. If anything, he attempted to manipulate the fic-

tional basis of visual mass media in order to make his ideological preferences palatable—that is, he attempted to simulate life in order to present it. If his scheme had worked (the simulation suppressed) and if his agents had nabbed the pusher (presumably, a minority), Bush could have used a bag of cocaine to proselytize about nearly anything he wanted to because we would have understood, in a subliminal and more persuasive manner, the visual cues.

Through visual mass media, we Americans have already been conditioned to respond to cocaine in programmed ways—by listing its debilitating personal and social effects, by explaining the havoc it wreaks upon countless helpless victims, by lamenting the criminal activity it spawns among pushers and addicts. Such widespread sentiment is easily harnessed, and for Bush it can be linked in an insidious fashion to more ideologically suspect issues such as political political intervention in Central and South America, reducing welfare programs in this country, and permitting racism to continue. I don't wish to make any judgments as to the moral gravity of drug use but only to point to the role of drugs as a political lever and the appropriation of visual mass media as a means of disseminating a political ideology. The war on drugs is neither a millennial crusade nor an altruistic act of the White House but rather a shrewd maneuver to foster a climate of political conservatism. However, our indoctrination into the forms of visual mass media could easily prevent us from seeing clearly.

Gorillas

continued from page 7

them.

What is behind this revolting development? Mostly, I think, it's a matter of money; or, more accurately, the ability of today's politicians to raise and spend vast sums of campaign cash.

To McAteer and his contemporaries, one's political reputation—one's image—was shaped largely by what appeared about one in the news. And since reporters generally controlled access to the news, they were to be courted and/or feared.

But it's different today. Today's politician has considerably more money to spend, and so he or she can buy the pollsters, media consultants and advertising needed to treat the news as but one of several avenues for reaching the public.

Why worry about what reports say when a spot or two on the *Cosby Show* probably reaches more voters than all the scribblers in the land? And who cares that some blow-dried anchor gives us only 20-seconds on

the local evening news when we can clobber opponents with "hit pieces" mailed to every household in the district?

Obviously, this business of going directly to the public is not something new. Through his "Fireside Chats," President Franklin D. Roosevelt was doing it more than 50 years ago. What's new, I believe, is that it's occurring now down at the statehouse and local election levels as well.

For instance, in addition to Assemblyman Bates, we have Art Agnos's campaign for mayor of San Francisco in 1987. The San Francisco newspapers carried many stories about his failure to properly report his dealings with a millionaire Sacramento developer, about a bill Agnos carried for the man and about financial benefits he received from him.

But Agnos won the election nevertheless, thanks again to a high spending campaign. In this case, though, it wasn't just television. The Agnos campaign featured

the expensive mailing of an expensive "issues" booklet to just about every voter in town. Without the money for such as that, Agnos surely would have lost.

And remember Mike Curb's campaign for lieutenant governor in 1986? Fearing reporters' questions about his political past, he ran away from the news, relying almost entirely on television and direct mail to tell voters about himself. Granted, he lost. But it wasn't by all that much, and he certainly proved that a politician can run a credible campaign with nary a news conference on his schedule.

There are other examples as well. But why go on? As I tell my students these days: 800 lb. gorillas are a vanishing tribe. A few still exist, but their habitat is slowly disappearing under a flood of cash. Reporters, of course, continue to exist and even multiply. But the natives often make monkeys of them.

Post Script

I would like to thank all the writers who contributed to this issue. Special thanks go to Wayne Kunert for his indispensable help and illustrative wizardry.

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